



Food for Thought

Food Insecurity in 21st Century Kingston



How it feels to live with food insecurity



The uptake of free school meals in Kingston lags behind London as a whole: Take up is 8.2% compared with 15.7% for primary schools; 6.3% compared with 17% for secondary schools.

The uptake of Healthy Start vouchers in Kingston is 60% of those eligible (target is 80%)

“There are approximately 170 non-school days a year when there is no access to free school meals”.

Do you see the real picture?

Kingston families are not claiming their fair share of national funding. In school holidays, some Kingston families are going hungry.

One in eight young people in Kingston live in poverty

The Kingston Foodbank provided 4,741 three day emergency food supplies in 2017/18

The Trussell Trust tell us 28% of referrals to foodbanks in general result from low income....

This is the biggest and fastest growing reason why people need their help

The average cost of a privately rented two bedroom flat is £1,391 per month



The reality in Kingston...

Do you recognise this reality?

Food insecurity pervades the lives of those who experience it. Food is such a fundamental... it's needed for energy but it is also a source of comfort, enjoyment and often a shared social experience.



Everyone has a right to good nutrition and food choices.

“Food insecurity is an assault on dignity that should be a thing of the past but shamefully it seems to be on the increase.”

So what's changed?

So, what has changed?

- More people are experiencing food insecurity – growth of food banks and usage – a rise in work poverty – **anyone can be vulnerable, some groups even more so**
- Incomes are unstable with zero hours contracts and overall cost of living rising – people have difficult choices to make – **heat or eat, childcare or eat, accommodation or food**
- The B word... **Brexit, potential food distribution issues and higher prices as a result**
- cafes, food distribution, community approaches to reducing food waste – **all are new responses coming from the community**

- Foodbank – various outlets
- Drop-ins, lunch clubs, social activities
- Signposting to support and advice
e.g. Children's centres, debt and welfare benefits advice
- Food collection and re-distribution...
reducing waste
- Cook and eat sessions – learning and providing
- Community gardens – grow and eat



What are we currently doing?

Not just symptoms, but causes.

- **Financial difficulties**
 - Account for 88% of the crises experienced by Kingston food bank users
 - This includes low paid employment, benefits issues, debt, no recourse to public funds etc
- **Practical difficulties**
 - Accessing support
 - Limited access to cooking facilities
 - Restricted mobility
 - Dependency on support workers or carers
- **Psychological difficulties**
 - Stigma and perceived loss of dignity
 - The shift from “just managing” to homeless can be extremely rapid, shocking and disorienting, leaving those affected open to deterioration in their health and wellbeing

What's needed? This is what our research suggested...

- If we take a **joined-up approach** to the complexity and causes, we can be more effective in countering them
- We should **explore** how the underlying causes of food insecurity can be challenged
- We need to **develop** innovative, sustainable ways to build food security to improve the health of residents in the borough
- We must **work together** to address the issues facing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups who are at risk of experiencing food insecurity



YOU can facilitate change!

What are our next steps?